Application No. 09/909,934
Filed: July 20, 2001
Group Art Unit: 2827

In the Claims

Please rewrite the indicated claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A stress-free lead frame (1) comprising;

~~a lead frame (10) having~~ a plurality of integrated circuit~~s~~ areas (11), each of said plurality of integrated circuit~~s~~ areas having a die pad (12) and a plurality of leads ~~(13)~~; and

a peripheral pad (14) surrounding said ~~lead frame (10),~~ plurality of integrated circuit areas,

~~characterised by~~

said peripheral pad (14) being provided with a plurality of stress-relief means (15).

2. (Currently Amended) A stress-free lead frame (1) comprising;

~~a lead frame (10) having~~ a plurality of integrated circuit~~s~~ areas (11), each of said plurality of integrated circuit~~s~~ areas having a die pad (12) and a plurality of leads (13); and

a peripheral pad (14) surrounding said ~~lead frame (10),~~ plurality of integrated circuit areas

~~characterized by~~

said peripheral pad (14) being provided with a plurality of interlocking means (16).

WEINGARTEN, SCHURGIN,
GAGNEBIN & LEBOVICI LLP
TEL. (617) 542-2290
FAX. (617) 451-0313

3. (Currently Amended) A stress-free lead frame (1) as claimed in Claim 1 ~~further characterized by~~ wherein said plurality of stress-relief means (15) comprises ~~being~~ holes and slots, each hole being a non-elongated opening and each slot being an elongated opening.

4. (Currently Amended) A stress-free lead frame (1) as claimed in Claim 3 ~~further characterized by~~ wherein said holes and slots ~~being~~ are arranged in multiple rows.

5. (Currently Amended) A stress-free lead frame (1) as claimed in Claim 2 ~~further characterized by~~ wherein each of said interlocking means (16) ~~being~~ comprises a plurality of slots, each slot being an elongated opening.

6. (Currently Amended) A stress-free lead frame (1) as claimed in Claim 4 ~~further characterized in that~~ wherein said holes and slots are arranged side by side at equal intervals.

7. (Currently Amended) A stress-free lead frame (1) as claimed in Claim 5 ~~further characterized in that~~ wherein said holes and slots are arranged side by side at equal intervals.

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